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ABSTRACT

"Indian High School" is a nonpublic off-reservation boarding school in New Mexico serving over 400 American Indian students. The large majority of the students come from the 19 Pueblo tribes, whose governors appoint school board members with authority to hire all personnel. The Bureau of Indian Affairs provides funding but acknowledges Pueblo rights to local control. Based on 3 years of qualitative research at Indian High School, this book focuses on the lives of Pueblo adolescents in school and seeks to explain why they achieve only limited academic success, despite the school's relatively abundant resources, its congenial atmosphere for Indian students, the good intentions of school personnel, and the aspirations of parents and students. A central theme in this exploration is the dual-world character of students' lives. At home, Pueblo students learn to place their tribal communities at the center of their loyalty, affect, responsibility, and support. But they attend a school whose origins and rationale are in non-Indian society. It is a school designed for becoming effective in mainstream America, an effectiveness that Pueblo students and their parents accept as requisite for their economic well-being. However, this process of becoming economically effective is problematic and ambiguous for Pueblo students as it often clashes with traditional cultural ideals that are at the heart of Pueblo communities' struggle for cultural survival. Contains 193 references and subject and author indexes. (SV)

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